

those who want to deepen their Jewish learning and commitment.

Rabbi Wise plays many roles in promoting the growth of a strong Jewish community and this involvement has been a staple of his career. During his years in New Jersey, Rabbi Wise taught rabbinic literature in the upper-school of the Solomon Schechter Day School of Raritan Valley. An active Zionist, Rabbi Wise also led the first ever Beth El congregational trip to Israel. As the vice president for special programming of the New Jersey Rabbinical Assembly, Rabbi Wise helped organize a spiritual retreat to the Princeton Theological Seminary after the High Holiday Season. Rabbi Wise was also a member of the steering committee for Jewish LIFE, a cooperative body of synagogues and Jewish institutions striving to bring adult learning to the community.

In addition to promoting Jewish education throughout New Jersey, Rabbi Wise has served on the boards of the Jewish Federation of Greater Middlesex County and Ramah Day Camp of Raritan Valley. Rabbi Wise also offered his services as a chaplain to the Franklin Township Police Department in New Jersey.

On behalf of the entire community, I am delighted to welcome Rabbi Wise, his wife, Judy Krinitz, and their two children, Jordana Nechama and Elijah Mordechai to our part of the Big Apple. We look forward to many years of his spiritual leadership as our pastor and our friend. Together, we will continue our efforts to make the Queens Jewish Community a place that our children and families are proud to call our home.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all my colleagues in the House to join me in welcoming and honoring the new spiritual leader of the Hollis Hills Jewish Center, a man of humor, knowledge, and wisdom, Rabbi David Wise. We send him our very best wishes.

THE TRADE PREFERENCE EXTENSION AND EXPANSION ACT

HON. CHARLES B. RANGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 30, 2006

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker, today Representative JEFFERSON, Representative McDERMOTT and I are introducing the Trade Preference Extension and Expansion Act. There are three key aspects to this legislation.

First, the act would extend for 1 year the trade benefits provided to developing countries under the U.S. Generalized System of Preferences ("GSP") and the Andean Trade Preference Act ("ATPA"). Both of these programs currently are scheduled to expire at the end of 2006. Our trade preference programs are critical, not just to workers and businesses in developing countries, but to U.S. workers and businesses. It is important that we extend these programs immediately in order to provide our trading partners, as well as U.S. manufacturers and retailers, the predictability necessary to make business and investment decisions for the future.

I have heard some of my colleagues suggest that we should let these programs lapse in order to pressure our trading partners to agree to the demands of U.S. negotiators in ongoing bilateral and multilateral trade nego-

tiations. I agree with my colleagues that we should be seeking the best deals possible with each of our trading partners. However, I disagree with the notion that the United States should threaten all of our developing country trading partners, many of which are struggling to pull themselves out of poverty, with the elimination of current trade benefits in an ill-considered attempt to strengthen our hand at the negotiating table.

I do not mean to suggest, however, that our current trade preference programs should never be changed to reflect new realities in trade and the rules of the WTO. For that reason, the Trade Preference Extension and Expansion Act calls for only a 1 year extension of GSP and ATPA. It is important to evaluate how well these programs are working for workers and businesses both in the United States and developing countries—and to consider whether changes should be made to improve the programs. In fact, Representative McDERMOTT, Representative JEFFERSON and I sent a letter to Chairman THOMAS today requesting that the Ways and Means Committee hold hearings as soon as possible to consider the future of GSP and ATPA, as well as the African Growth and Opportunity Act ("AGOA"). I believe it is important that the Congress and all interested stakeholders begin to investigate and consider this issue immediately, as it is likely that Congress will make changes to these programs next year in order to implement agreements negotiated as part of the Doha Development Agenda round of World Trade Organization negotiations.

The second key aspect of the Trade Preference Extension and Expansion Act is the extension and expansion of benefits provided to sub-Saharan Africa under AGOA. In the year since the expiration of global textile and apparel quotas, sub-Saharan Africa's exports to the United States of apparel fell by 16 percent, and the sector has lost as many as 100,000 jobs. Further, the textile and apparel industries in sub-Saharan Africa face many challenges beyond the elimination of global quotas, including competition from well-established and sometimes subsidized producers, such as China, and inadequate infrastructure and other supply-side constraints.

In recognition of these challenges, the Trade Preference Extension and Expansion Act would extend until December 2007, the current duty-free benefits provided under AGOA for apparel made in least developed African countries from third country fabric. If this benefit is not extended, it will be reduced in half on October 1 of this year, putting at risk the fledgling apparel industries that have provided vitally needed jobs and economic growth in sub-Saharan Africa.

The Act also would establish a simpler, value-added rule of origin for apparel and extend additional benefits to the textile and agricultural sectors under AGOA. These provisions are intended to enable the textile and apparel industries in sub-Saharan Africa to compete, given the current market reality in the region, which is that African textile mills cannot generally produce fabric in sufficient quantity and variety to meet the needs of African apparel producers or market demand. In addition, these provisions are intended to promote sustainable development in sub-Saharan Africa by promoting the diversification of the economies of countries in the region, particularly in the agricultural sector.

Representative McDERMOTT, Representative JEFFERSON and I have put forward these ideas regarding the expansion of benefits for textile, apparel and agricultural products under AGOA as a way to start a discussion among other Members and stakeholders about the best way to promote sustainable economic growth in sub-Saharan Africa. We recognize that sub-Saharan Africa faces a wide variety of challenges and that there are potentially several different approaches that could be taken to promote the long-term health of the region. We look forward to working with our colleagues, interested parties in the private sector and civil society, and AGOA country governments to gather additional information about the best ways to address the challenges facing sub-Saharan Africa today, and we stand ready to work in Congress to ensure that the United States continues to play a leadership role in promoting economic development in the region.

The third key aspect of the Trade Preference Extension and Expansion Act is a Sense of the Congress resolution calling on the President to make a determination as soon as possible regarding the extension of AGOA benefits to Liberia. The October 2005 elections in Liberia represented a key step in building peace in Liberia, following nearly two decades of civil war. Further, the election of Ms. Ellen Johnson Sirleaf as President of Liberia marks an important milestone for Africa, as President Johnson Sirleaf is the first elected female President in African history. President Johnson Sirleaf has laid out a multifaceted government agenda emphasizing security, public and private-sector led revitalization, good governance and anti-corruption efforts, regional and international cooperation, and political reconciliation and inclusiveness. President Sirleaf Johnson also has made the improvement of workers rights a high priority. In light of recent progress in Liberia and need to promote economic growth in the country, I believe it is important that the President extend AGOA benefits to Liberia as soon as possible.

I urge my colleagues to join Representatives McDERMOTT, JEFFERSON and me in supporting the Trade Preference Extension and Expansion Act.

THE COALITION FOR INTERNATIONAL JUSTICE

HON. CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 30, 2006

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, it has come to my attention that a Washington-based non-governmental organization—the Coalition for International Justice—will close its offices this week after 10 years of service to the cause of justice around the world.

Serving as Chairman and Co-Chairman of the Helsinki Commission for that same period of time, I have worked closely with the Coalition and seen the effect of its work. Ten years ago, the conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina was a priority in U.S. foreign policy, a conflict in which numerous war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide were committed. Many of us fought for the inclusion of basic justice as an element in our country's policy response, and an international tribunal was fortunately created for that purpose. At the time,